In the Claims:

1.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   For use with a <u>limited access</u>
multinode cooperative telecommunication network, wherein a
respective ~~node is~~ node comprises a private branch exchange
<u>(PBX) platform and each having a separate dialing plan, wherein</u>
<u>each node has a copy of the dialing plan only for its node as a</u>
<u>(PBX) platform and no other nodes and</u> operative to service
multiple telecommunication devices coupled to said respective
node <u>through the respective separate dialing plan for a node</u>,
each communication device having an extension <u>within a</u>
<u>respective dialing plan for a node</u> that is used in the course
of routing a call from a calling communication device to a
called communication device, a method of routing a call from a
calling communication device at a first node to a called device
at another node comprising the steps of:
     (a)   transmitting a query message from said first node to
all other nodes of said network, said query message being
operative to determine whether a respective node receiving said
query message is coupled to said called device;
     (b)   at a second node to which said called device is
coupled, transmitting a reply message to said first node
indicating that said second node is coupled to said called
device <u>such that other nodes not having the called device</u>
<u>coupled thereto are not transmitting a reply message</u>; and
     (c)   in response to receipt of said reply message by said
first node, routing said call from said first node to said
second node, so that said second node may complete the
connection of said call to said called device <u>without requiring</u>
<u>a copy of dialing plans for all other nodes</u>.

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2.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   The method according to claim 1, wherein step (a) includes the precursor step of causing said first node to examine an associated ~~call plan~~ dialing plan therefor to determine whether said first node is coupled to said called device.

3.   (ORIGINAL)   The method according to claim 1, wherein step (b) comprises at one or more third nodes to which said called device is not coupled, ignoring said query message, so that no reply message is transmitted therefrom.

4.   (CANCELLED)

5.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   A method of operating a multinode cooperative telecommunication network comprising a plurality of nodes coupled to one another by way of an internode communication path, each node comprises a private branch exchange (PBX) platform and each having a separate dialing plan, wherein each node has a copy of the dialing plan only for its node as a (PBX) platform and no other nodes and being operative to service multiple telecommunication devices coupled thereto through the respective separate dialing plan for a node, each communication device having an extension within a respective dialing plan for a node that is used in the course of routing a call from a calling communication device to a called communication device, said method comprising the steps of:
    (a)   in response to the placement of a call from a communication device coupled to a first node, causing said

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first node to examine an associated ~~call plan~~ dialing plan
therefor to determine whether said first node is coupled to
said called device;

(b)   in response to said first node determining that said
first node is not coupled to said called device, transmitting a
query message from said first node to all other nodes of said
network, said query message being operative to inquire whether
a respective node receiving said query message is coupled to
said called device;

(c)   at a second node to which said called device is
coupled, transmitting a reply message to said first node
indicating that said second node is coupled to said called
device such that other nodes not having the called device
coupled thereto are not transmitting a reply message; and

(d)   in response to receipt of said reply message by said
first node, routing said call from said first node to said
second node, so that said second node may complete the
connection of said call to said called device without requiring
a copy of dialing plans for all other nodes.

6.   (ORIGINAL)   The method according to claim 5, wherein
step (c) further comprises, at one or more third nodes to which
said called device is not coupled, ignoring said query message,
so that no reply message is transmitted therefrom.

7.   (CANCELLED)

8.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED)   A method of operating a
multinode, cooperative, restricted access telecommunication
network comprising a plurality of nodes coupled to one another

by way of an internode communication path, each node <u>comprises</u> <u>a private branch exchange (PBX) platform and each having a</u> <u>separate dialing plan, wherein each node has a copy of the</u> <u>dialing plan only for its node as a (PBX) platform and no other</u> <u>nodes and</u> being operative to service multiple telecommunication devices coupled thereto <u>through the respective separate dialing</u> <u>plan for a node</u>, each communication device having an extension <u>within a respective dialing plan for a node</u> that is used in the course of routing a call from a calling communication device to a called communication device, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   storing at each node a~~ call~~ the dialing plan that contains only communication device extensions that are coupled to said each node;

(b)   in response to the placement of a call from a communication device coupled to a first node, causing said first node to examine an associated ~~call plan~~ dialing plan only therefor, so as to determine whether said first node is coupled to said called device;

(c)   in response to said first node determining that said first node is coupled to said called device, routing said call to said called device, but otherwise transmitting a query message from said first node to all other nodes of said network, said query message being operative to inquire whether a respective node receiving said query message is coupled to said called device;

(d)   at said all other nodes of said network examining respective call plans only therefor, so as to determine whether said called device is contained therein;

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    (e)   at only a second node which is that one of said all other nodes of said network to which said called device is coupled, transmitting a reply message to said first node indicating that said second node is coupled to said called device <u>such that other nodes not having the called device coupled thereto are not transmitting a reply message</u>; and

    (f)   in response to receipt of said reply message by said first node, routing said call from said first node to said second node, so that said second node may complete the connection of said call to said called device <u>without requiring a copy of dialing plans for all other nodes</u>.

    9.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to ~~claim 5~~ <u>Claim 8</u>, wherein step (e) further comprises, at one or more third nodes to which said called device is not coupled, ignoring said query message, so that no reply message is transmitted therefrom.

    10.   (CANCELLED)